
CDF NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



CONTACT: Karen Terrill
CDF Information Officer
(916-653-5123)

RELEASE May 1, 2001
DATE:

Bryan Zollner
CDF Public Education Officer
(916-653-5817)

YOUR PLACE OR MINE?

Don't let wildfire destroy either this fire season!

Wildfire Awareness Week, May 13 – 19, 2001

SACRAMENTO – Fires occur throughout the State on a daily basis during fire season. To encourage Californians to prepare for this year's fire season, Governor Davis has proclaimed May 13-19 Wildfire Awareness Week 2001. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) and the California Fire Safe Council are working together throughout the week to educate Californians on the importance of taking fire safety measures now!

Since fire is a natural and inevitable part of California's environment, living here means learning to live with fire. CDF and local Fire Safe Councils throughout the State are calling upon Californians to give their homes and property a fighting chance against wildfire this season. The steps that homeowners take now will give firefighters a safe area to battle threatening flames. Wildfires know no boundaries! The "YOUR PLACE OR MINE?" theme is meant to make homeowners realize that the actions they take now, could be the ones that stop a fire in its tracks. If they encourage their neighbors and community to take those same steps – disaster could be avoided.

The single most important step is clearance of all dry grass, brush and dead leaves at least 30 feet around all structures on the property. Incorporating fire safe landscaping into this "defensible space", and throughout the property, can be beautiful and functional.

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Fire safe landscaping means strategically placing fire resistant, drought tolerant plants around the perimeter of one's home and property. A local nursery is an excellent source for information about the types of these plants that grow well in each part of the State. A bonus with fire resistant, drought tolerant landscaping is that it requires less water – an important energy saving tip during California's energy crisis.

The State of California is taking action to reduce future losses and damage as this year's fire season begins. CDF Units are implementing individual clearance projects throughout the State. For example, the CDF Riverside Unit will hold a news conference to spotlight a combination of fuel reduction programs, including a community chipping program, a prescribed fire program, and the use of goats in weed abatement.

Local Fire Safe Councils in communities throughout the State also are implementing projects in recognition of Wildfire Awareness Week. For example, FireSafe Marin will use satellite imagery to create a county map to track Sudden Oak Death syndrome and inform surrounding communities of the problem so they can prepare for it. In San Bernardino County, the Mountain Rim Fire Safe Council will unveil a new fire safe demonstration garden. The Fire Safe Council is a coalition of public and private sector organizations that share a common, vested interest in reducing losses from wildfire.

"Unfortunately last year's mild fire season here in California does not necessarily mean another mild season is ahead," said Andrea Tuttle, CDF Director. "We all saw the destruction wildfires caused in other Western States last summer. The longer that areas of California persist without burning, the more fuels accumulate, and the hotter and higher the flames will be when the next fire occurs. Wildfire Awareness Week is designed to remind Californians that lives, homes and communities can be saved from potentially damaging fires if citizens do their part in providing for fire safety," added Director Tuttle.

In addition, CDF and the Fire Safe Council encourage Californians to perform a number of other simple actions in and around their homes to reduce the risk of fire damage not only to their own property, but to their neighborhoods and surrounding community as well. These activities include: 1) cleaning all dead leaves and needles from roofs and gutters; 2) trimming tree branches at least 10 feet from roofs; 3) clearly marking all emergency water sources; 4) removing all stacks of construction materials, pine needles, leaves and other debris from the yard; and 5) making sure to never stack wood piles next to the house or wood fence.

A complete homeowner checklist and additional fire preparedness information is available on the CDF Web site at www.fire.ca.gov and the Fire Safe Council Web site at www.firesafecouncil.org.

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